
Boran Berčić (ed.), *Perspectives on the Self* (Rijeka: University of Rijeka, 2017), 375 pp.

Joint into the common task, an international team of authors gathered in this editor's volume, offers what the title says – different perspectives on the Self. Edited by Boran Berčić, this volume attempts to clarify the vague notion of human's personal identity and the issues it raises in different branches of philosophy. Thematically divided into six parts, the volume consists of seventeen original articles accompanied by a comprehensive editor's overview that serves as an introduction. Given that the articles address a range of different questions about the Self and related matters, I find this overview very helpful for the readers who aim to target a specific issue.

The first, and in my opinion, philosophically most interesting part is entitled "Self and Body". This chapter consists of three articles that, each in its own way, target contemporary debate in the philosophy of mind and cognitive science on embodied nature of cognition. The Chapter starts with Eric T. Olson's article, "The Central Dogma of Transhumanism", in which he argues that the self is exclusively material, "made up entirely out of matter" (p. 45). The full range of all human capacities (perceptual, cognitive and motor) depends entirely upon features of the physical material thing humans are – biological organisms. On this ground, Olson notoriously rejects *the central dogma of transhumanism* (CDT) according to which humans can upload themselves into computers and continue their existence as inorganic beings. The CDT presupposes three contentious claims: (1) there can be genuine artificial intelligence, (2) we could become computer people, (3) technology can advance to the point where uploading will be possible. Olson especially outlines two problems for the second presupposition: the branching problem (uploading ourselves into several computers and continuing our existence as several persons) and the duplicate problem (blurring the difference between uploaded person and newly created computer person). In concluding remarks of the paper, Olson, even though rejects them as metaphysically incorrect, examines the option that transhumanist views might be good enough for practical purposes. However, he concludes with a reasonable statement: "it looks doubtful whether computer people could have what matters to us in identity: whether having psychological duplicates in computer would be just as good for us, practically speaking, as literally moving there ourselves" (p. 56). The following article of the first chapter follows the issue of embodied cognition. Contrary to Olson, who claims that humans are material entities, Miljana Milojević in "Embodied and Extended Self" argues that the self is nothing more than a set of various functions. She supports her argument with a well-

known example of Otto who has Alzheimer's and cannot remember anything without his notebook. Milojević argues that Otto's notebook is literary part of him, while stressing the importance of rethinking the boundaries of the physical realization of the self. In answering what make us "exist as single thinking, perceiving and acting entities persisting through time" (p. 78), she combines different philosophical traditions and concludes that humans are embodied but can extend beyond the boundary of the individual organism. The question of what makes the personal identity of individual biological organism is presented in the third article, "The Immunological Self". In this paper, Zdenka Brzović tries to find an adequate candidate for a theory of organism's identity. After the brief overview of various immunological theories of identity, and a special emphasis on the self-nonsel theory in immunology, Brzović concludes that none of the listed theory is satisfactory as they already presuppose the existence of the organism's identity.

The second part of the volume entitled "Self-knowledge" can best be described with an Ancient Greek motto: "Know thyself!". The chapter consists of Nenad Mišćević's article "The Value of Self- Knowledge" and Luca Malatesti's "The Self-ascription of Conscious Experience". Mišćević in his article analyzes two kinds of self-knowledge, both characterized in terms of a virtue-epistemological framework: (1) *knowledge of inner phenomenal states* (knowledge that I feel pain in my back) and (2) *knowledge of one's causal and dispositional properties* (knowledge that I am a gourmet). With optimistic view on the value of the self-knowledge and self-inquisitiveness, Mišćević calls upon the injunction "Know thyself." as an advice that is still valuable. Luca Malatesti in "The Self-ascription of Conscious Experience" complements Mišćević's paper with the aspiration to give an answer to the question: *How do we ascribe the experience (that I have pain in my back) to ourselves?* Rejecting traditional theories within philosophy of mind (behaviorism, physicalism and functionalism), Malatesti follows Alan Miller and concludes that self-ascription "involves the capacity to think about ourselves as entities that have sense organs and internal mental states that are determined by interaction with certain sorts of stimulation of these sense organs" (p. 135).

Although it is somewhere suggested that the concern with the self is the product of modern philosophy starting with Descartes¹, the third part entitled "Self in the history of philosophy" proves the opposite. This chapter gathers articles that analyze the nature of the self in different philosophical traditions and periods: Boran Berčić in "The Logical Positivists on the Self" examines what logical positivists (Schlick, Carnap, Ayer, Weinberg, and Reichenbach) thought about the self with special emphasis on Descartes'

¹ Klaus Brinkmann, "Consciousness, Self-Consciousness, and the Modern Self", *History of the Modern Sciences*, 18(4), 2005, 27–48.

Cogito; Ljudevit Hanžek in “Brentano on Self-Consciousness” critically analyzes Franz Brentano’s view that all our mental states have a quality of inner consciousness, and the arguments of contemporary authors keen to Brentano’s view about self-consciousness; Goran Kardaš in “The No-Self View in Buddhist Philosophy” presents an interesting overview of Buddhist’s No-Self View and examines its validity; Ana Gavran Miloš in “The Self in Ancient Philosophy” wonders if the notion of self (i.e. subjectivity and first-person perspective) existed in the philosophical thought of ancients.

The following, fourth part of the volume switches back into contemporary debates on the self and aims to answer questions concerning personal identity and the nature of agency. The latter presents an important issue in philosophy of mind, ethics, the debates on (moral) reasons, and the debates on free will. All these are intertwined in the following three articles. Matej Sušnik in “Ideal Self in Non-Ideal Circumstances” questions the impact the ideal self has on the actual, real self in moral deliberation process. Sušnik positions himself with Bernard William’s internalism about reasons according to which “an agent has a reason to perform some action only if he could become motivated to perform that action through the process of reasoning” (p. 224). This view, Sušnik continues, brings to the surface the importance of the process of idealization. It is through this process that we learn something about ourselves (e.g. what is the best way to proceed in given circumstances), but also it is the process through which we can “step into someone’s shoes” and learn about other people’s reasons and motivations they have in the process of decision making. The decision making process and the issue of agency in context of the debate on free will are problems Filip Čeč discusses in “The Disappearing Agent”, while Marko Jurjako in “Agency and Reductionism about the Self” evaluates the compatibility of Parfit’s psychological criterion of personal identity and the agency based account of the self.

Fifth part of the editor’s volume is dedicated to the theme that is not common among debates on the self – the nonexistence of the self. In “On Never Been Born” Marin Biondić examines the possibility of talking about the people who have never existed and those who do not yet exist. In “Fictional Characters” Iris Vidmar examines whether there is such a thing as a rigid personal identity of fictional characters.

In the last part of the volume, entitled “Metaphysics & Philosophy of Language”, authors explore timeless questions of self-identification. Marta Ujvari in “Haecceity Today and with Duns Scotus” analyzes haecceity, the concept that contemporary metaphysics uses “to secure the transworld identity of concrete individuals in non-qualitative terms” (p. 331). In “Who am I?” Arto Mutanen wonders what counts as a valid answer to the question expressed in the title, while Takashi Yagisawa in “Meta-Representational *Me*”

questions the role first person singular *me* has in philosophy of language and philosophy in general.

It is impossible to do justice to the complexity of each paper of the volume, but I think it suffices to say that they are of good quality and invariably interesting. As mentioned, the volume assembles innovative positions and perspectives, but, in my opinion, it is not comprehensive enough to be useful without additional readings. Overall, this editor's volume is a thought-provoking resource of original ideas and new arguments that will, undoubtedly, advance the understanding of complexity of the self and the implications it has on the debates as conducted in different branches of philosophy.

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